

Appl. No. 09/836,209
Amdt. dated December 8, 2004
Reply to Office action of September 8, 2004

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Examiner:

Claim 1 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being obvious over Oberteuffer et al. (6,438,523), in view of Yong et al. (6,064,959). Claims 2-8 are
5 rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being obvious over Oberteuffer et al. and Young et al., and further in view of Larkey (5,127,055) and Carmen, 11 (5,454,046).

Response:

10 In the response to the previous Office action of 04/11/2004, claims were presented un-amended and the Applicant provided evidence that Oberteuffer et al. does not appear to anticipate the specific claim 1 limitation of "generating a third list that is an intersection of characters common to the first list and the second list". In the current Office action, the Examiner has responded by stating that
15 Oberteuffer et al.'s teaching of using a second modal input to "select from among" candidates generated by a first modal input to produce improved results anticipates "intersection". The Examiner explains by providing an argument as to why the Examiner maintains that view, and concludes that two operations, meaning intersection and difference, would have been obvious to one skilled in
20 the art.

The Applicant appreciates the Examiner's efforts to provide a written explanation of the stated position and reasoning. However, the intended point by the Applicant in the response to the previous Office action was that although an
25 intersection of two lists may possibly be termed as "selecting from among", Oberteuffer et al.'s disclosed "selecting from among" does not necessarily mean "intersection". Of all the prior arts of record in this case, not a single one utilizes or discloses an "intersection" to improve multimodal input recognition. They specifically disclose many other methods, but do not even mention "intersection".
30 The Applicant's response then provided lengthy examples of the methods taught by two of the prior arts of record which "select from among" and were shown to

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be functionally different from an intersection.

5 Because the alleged obviousness of the present inventive method was
seasonably challenged in the response to the previous Office action in accordance
with MPEP 2144.03 and no relevant prior art was introduced to support the
"obviousness" position, also in accordance with MPEP 2144.03, the Applicant
respectfully formally requests relevant supporting art and that the finality of this
Office action be withdrawn at least until such art is entered into the record. Until
10 such art is produced, the Applicant is forced to interpret the Examiner's
explanation as is best understood.

As is best understand, the Examiner's position is that Oberteuffer et al.'s
teaching of "select from among" anticipates any and all possible specific
15 methods of using information contained in two separate lists to obtain a narrower
third list. Because the Examiner's explanation does not state a difference as is
best understood, this position covers not only intersection and difference, but
additionally covers the two prior art examples provided by the Applicant in the
previous response and presumably any other method which reduces the number
20 of elements in the first list.

The Applicant believes that teaching the entire genus does not necessarily
teach the specific species, so to speak. USPTO documents appear to agree with
the Applicant, at least in this case. To cite a specific example, please refer to U.S.
25 Patent No. 6,823,308, which was filed after Oberteuffer et al. and also discloses a
multi-modal input method. The claims of the '308 patent comprise receiving
inputs from speech and a second modal input and recognizing words (narrowing
the list) by using features found in both inputs. The '308 patent therefore also
"selects from among" and was issued. Yes, it is true that the claims of the '308
30 patent include details clearly not anticipated by Oberteuffer et al. However, these
details appear to be limited to the specific method used to recognize the word (to
"select from among"), not in the basic idea of obtaining two different modal

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inputs and using the second input to "select from among" data found in the first input. It is the fact that this patent was issued that obviously implies that it is the specific details of the method that are important to patentability. Here the Applicant agrees.

It is the specific details, not the complexity or the manner in which the invention is made. The beauty of the present invention is its simplicity. As described in the current specification, long lists of candidates may be generated by each modality, especially when utilizing tonal languages such as Chinese or Japanese. Anyone skilled in the art understands that accuracy rates in the recognition of such tonal languages have much room for improvement. The present invention improves it by providing a way to aid the user overcome software grammatical difficulties by narrowing down these long lists into a more reasonable and useful shorter list of choices from which the user can select the correct characters. Of all possible methods of narrowing down the candidates, the present invention specifically discloses and claims taking the intersection of the inputs of the two modalities, a limitation detail that is not specifically taught in any of the known prior art. This unique feature provides high accuracy rates while greatly reducing the size and complexity (and therefore cost) of the above cited methods. Therefore, the Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and allowance of claims 1-8.

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Sincerely yours,

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